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Mapplethorpe trial ends in acquittal

After less than two hours of deliberation, a jury determines that the Contemporary Arts Center and its director did not violate obscenity laws by showing the late artists' photographs

By John Zeh

CINCINNATI — Hamilton County conservatives lost their battle to skewer the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) as a bastion of smut Oct. 5, when a jury acquitted the museum and its director of obscenity and "child pornography" charges.

Arts advocates and organizers in the Queen City's gay and lesbian community hailed the verdict, calling it a new day for human rights here. They also promised more battles, both inside and outside of the courtroom, if the city presses charges against protesters cited for civil disobedience on the trial's opening day, Sept. 24. (See *GCN*, Sept. 30.)

"We're thrilled," said Bill Wilson, treasurer of the Gay and Lesbian March Activists (GLMA), which organized the rally. "For Cincinnati, this has been a real turning point," he said. "The gay and lesbian community has been in the news every day, more than during any gay pride week. It's really been important for us." Citing "people's love for the First Amendment," he said, "it's a good day for Cincinnati and the Bill of Rights."

The CAC and director Dennis Barrie stood trial on two misdemeanors each in municipal court for showing "Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment," a retrospective of 175 photographs by the late artist that toured the country. The downtown museum faced \$10,000 in fines; Barrie could have been fined \$2,000 and sentenced to a year in prison.

The four men and four women who made up the jury needed less than two hours to certify the defendants' innocence. They left the tiny courtroom without comment after the two-week trial, which marked the first time in U.S. history that a museum has faced prosecution for obscenity charges.

"There was no case, there never was a case," said defense attorney Marc Mezibov. "This sends a message across the country not to waste money on this kind of prosecution."

Added law partner Louis Sirkin, "It's a signal to everybody that before they can start shutting down museums and telling people what they can say and what they can see, they better realize there's a protection out there."

"It's the greatest document ever written," he said. "Yes, we have a Bill of Rights, but we must fight for [it]."

"A major battle was fought here for the arts, for creativity," said Barrie. He called the verdict "a great day for America," saying, "we did something very important in this city."

"We stood up for the First Amendment. Those eight jurors know what freedom is all

about, exercised their rights as individuals and Americans, and stood up for that freedom," said Barrie, adding, "We won, the Reds are going to win, what more can you ask for?"

Arnold Lohmann of the American Association of Museum Directors also found baseball an apt metaphor as pennant fever swept Cincinnati. "It's very important that this vindication has come locally," he said. "It's like the home team winning the World Series at home."

The evening the jury finished its work, the Cincinnati Reds defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates in the second game of the National League play-offs. Fans leaving Riverfront Stadium passed by gay and lesbian celebrants outside the CAC who were holding signs that said, "Honk if you love art."

The night before the verdict was announced, the city staged its premier photo opportunity, with downtown businesses burning lights for network television and shutterbugs. In his closing, Mezibov said he was "touched to see this city lit up for the entire country to see." He told the jury, "You have the opportunity to light up this city once again."

City prosecutor Frank Prouty, Jr. disagreed, saying, "This is not art. Those five pictures are not art. Those are graphic depictions of sexual activity." Prouty then described five of the seven pictures under scrutiny in court, as "homoeerotic, S & M photos." The other two works show a naked boy and a young girl with her dress raised and vagina visible.

Following the trial, County Prosecutor Arthur Ney, Sr., said that he had acted because "the only alternative was to let those without an interest in the controversy make the final decision." Ney impaneled the grand jury that handed down the obscenity indictments after crashing the exhibit's April opening (see *GCN*, April 8). "Whether you agree with the verdict or not," he said, "the final analysis is that the system works."

Ney's explanation was challenged by Allen Brown, a veteran civil liberties lawyer now retired, who said, "The bad faith of that statement is so evident. It is use of power politics, rather than good-faith determination of differences of opinion in the community." Brown added that Ney's "continued insult to the public intelligence is such a phony hypocrisy. That's what this jury woke up to."

Brown further noted that Ohio law permits a prosecutor facing a possible obscene work to petition a court for a hearing to decide whether the work should be barred and be

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OUTING OURSELVES

Stories in Celebration of National Coming Out Day, October 11, 1990

Demos in Kansas City and S.F. blast medical bigwigs

California activists call for swift drug approvals, and a series of demos in Missouri pushes for patients' rights to determine their own treatments

By Chris Nealon

SAN FRANCISCO — In a flurry of organizing from the Midwest to the West Coast, AIDS activists around the U.S. blasted the medical and pharmaceutical establishments, taking over a Kansas City "health fraud" conference and causing commotion at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in San Francisco.

The newly formed ACT UP/Golden Gate chapter targeted the FDA Oct. 9, staging a major demonstration to demand faster drug approval for two new anti-HIV treatments. Between 200 and 300 activists gathered at United Nations Plaza and called for approval of ddI and ddC. Sixteen protesters were arrested after they chained themselves to the FDA entrance and demanded to speak with officials about approval for the two drugs. Some activists and researchers have touted ddI and ddC as more effective than AZT, the only federally approved anti-HIV drug currently on the market.

Three weeks earlier, in Kansas City, Mo., AIDS activists from around the U.S. demonstrated against the National Council Against Health Fraud conference, held Sept. 15-18. The activists charged that the Council stands in the way of freedom of treatment choice for people with HIV/AIDS. The Council's stated purpose is to act as a consumer protector that takes action against fraudulent health practices, such as charging exorbitant fees for vitamin treatments. Protesters claimed, however, that the Council's real allegiance is to wealthy pharmaceutical and insurance companies that oppose any unorthodox treatments.

The series of Missouri actions, organized by ACT UP/Kansas City and ACT UP/New York, included a phone zap of the event, a "counter-conference" featuring speakers involved in alternative HIV/AIDS treatments, and civil disobedience outside the conference

site. The protests culminated with activists storming the stage during conference proceedings, shouting, "Arrest the real criminals." Twenty-three demonstrators were arrested in the action.

'Overwhelming evidence'

"In this case, I'm optimistic about the FDA," said ACT UP/Golden Gate member Brenda Lein, commenting on the possible after-effects of the San Francisco protest. "There's overwhelming evidence in support of the effectiveness of ddI and ddC," she told *GCN*, adding that there is currently more information available about ddI and ddC than there was about AZT when it was approved in 1987.

Activists argue that faster approval of new drugs is particularly important now that the limitations of AZT have become clear. Lein noted, for instance, that a high percentage of people with AIDS/HIV cannot chemically tolerate AZT; she also remarked that of those people who can use AZT, virtually all of them develop resistance to it after 18 months.

On the other hand, said Lein, one 21-week study showed an increase in the survival rate of patients from 50 percent with AZT to 80 percent with ddI or ddC, and greater than 90 percent with therapies combining the various drugs. "Given that, it's almost criminal that [ddI and ddC are] not more widely available," she said.

Unfortunately, Lein remarked, drug approval is an extremely slow process, in part "because FDA guidelines are so ambiguous." She added that the FDA is reluctant to consult drug companies about how drug testing might be run, so that the pharmaceuticals have become conservative about what drugs they're willing to test, and how they should test them. For instance, said Lein, "drug companies don't feel they can design clinical trials creatively." Clinical

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MARILYN HUMPHRIES

Rosie Jimenez day spurs memories and actions

BOSTON—More than 200 people marched Oct. 4 in an annual demonstration commemorating the death of Rosie Jimenez, who is believed to be the first woman to die of an illegal abortion following the elimination of federal Medicaid funds for the procedure. The spirited protest march, sponsored by the Boston chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), demanded the reinstatement of federal funds for abortion and urged Massachusetts voters to “defeat the anti-social service CLT [Citizens for Limited Taxation] petition” (an anti-tax ballot question).

Chanting “They say roll back, we say fight back,” the group of student, feminist, and Latino activists marched with social service advocates along Massachusetts Avenue from Boston City Hospital to Copley Square. Progressive activists have said that the tax cuts proposed by the CLT petition would devastate all human services, particularly health care, education, and services for poor people (see *GCN*, Oct. 7). The protest “highlighted the need to secure access to all health care services,” according to NOW.

Following the march, a brief rally was held to remember Rosie Jimenez and all women who have died because of illegal abortions. Jimenez died Oct. 3, 1977, following the passage the previous August of the Hyde Amendment, which eliminated all public funding for abortion. Marta Rosa, a Latina School Committee member from Chelsea, spoke in Spanish about the life of Rosie Jimenez. Ellen Convisser, president of Boston NOW, delivered the same speech in English.

“Rosie died trying to maintain control of her own life and her own body,” said Convisser. “In an affidavit [written] after Rosie’s death, her best friend said, ‘[Rosie] changed my life. She was the one who talked me into going to college. We both had little children and I wasn’t so sure. But Rosie said, ‘We have to; we have to become independent.’ We didn’t want to work in the fields, Rosie and me. We didn’t even want to be secretaries.”

Convisser concluded, “Rosie died because the federal government said that the right to privacy and the right to abortion were rights for those with money, not those with Medicaid cards.”

On Oct. 3, the anniversary of Jimenez’s death, the Reproductive Rights Network also commemorated the event, passing out leaflets on the subway to commuters. The flyer said that, “The conditions that forced [Jimenez’s] death still threaten many women’s lives, especially the lives of poor women, young women, and women of color.” It cited restrictive recent Supreme Court decisions, the bombing of an abortion clinic in Worcester, Mass., infant mortality rates in communities of color, and social service cuts as attacks on access to health care and reproductive freedom.

Laura Briggs

Straight bar throws out Queer Nation members

Graffiti, dancing, and same-sex kissing outrage heterosexual owner and patrons

By Chris Nealon

BOSTON — Angry at having been forcibly removed from a local bar on Oct. 6, lesbian and gay activists here say they are considering taking legal action against a police officer who reportedly threw them out. The activists, members of the group Queer Nation, were dancing at the predominantly heterosexual Stocks and Bonds as part of a “visibility action.”

Such actions usually involve lesbians and gay men making themselves known in traditionally heterosexual places. In this case, Queer Nation members say, they were being openly affectionate and suddenly found themselves the focus of great hostility.

“It was very serious, a very outrageous thing,” said Jamie Pierce, a Queer Nation member who was at Stocks and Bonds. Pierce told *GCN* that “the whole thing was initiated by a Boston policeman. He just lost his cool — he couldn’t stand the sight of us.”

According to Pierce, the 12 activists arrived at the bar around 10:30 and “acted like ourselves, danced, basically were there.” He said that at 11:55, two gay men in the group who were kissing were ejected by a uniformed Boston policeman who told them, “‘you can’t do that in here.’” Pierce said that when he and his lover saw what was happening, they decided to start kissing as well. At that point, Pierce said, the officer

grabbed Pierce’s lover by the throat and pushed him back about 25 feet to the entrance of the bar.

“The bouncers took this to be a signal and immediately began to round up everybody else,” said Pierce. In any case, he added, the other Queer Nation people had begun to slip out of the bar, because “it was too dangerous to stay in there at that point.” Once the activists were all outside the bar, Pierce continued, they began blowing whistles and chanting, at which point someone in the bar called the police. Shortly thereafter, six police cars arrived at Stocks and Bonds, and the additional officers advised the Queer Nation members to leave the premises.

The activists moved on to a nearby police station, where Pierce said they filed a complaint against the bar and the officer, Paul Gains (badge #1007). The internal affairs division of the Boston police department told *GCN* that it was going to investigate the charges against Gains.

‘The more normal reaction’

Pierce said that although Queer Nation/Boston has been doing visibility actions since its inception in July, this was the first time he had encountered physical violence. He added that he thought there could be several reasons for the difference: in earlier instances, Pierce said, much larger

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Pro-choicers thwart anti-abortionists

Abortion rights activists charge that they were arrested for ‘no legitimate reason’

By Julie Graham

BOSTON—In two separate counter-protests, abortion rights activists mobilized here on the weekend of Oct. 6-7 to oppose anti-choice demonstrations.

On Saturday, Oct. 6, about 45 pro-choice advocates gathered in the Mission Hill area to impede an anti-choice group marching to the Planned Parenthood clinic in Brookline. The anti-choice rally, spearheaded by the fundamentalist organization Operation Rescue, began at the Mission Hill Church at about 7:30 a.m., and ended at Planned Parenthood, where anti-abortionists hoped to harass the clinic’s clients as they arrived for appointments.

Marlene Fried, a member of the Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2), the group responsible for coordinating the counter-demo, told *GCN* that the goal of the abortion rights activists was “to keep the anti-abortionists from getting to the clinic until most of the clients had gotten through the clinic doors.”

The abortion rights activists converged with the anti-choice demonstrators near

Huntington Avenue, and stood in front of the group, attempting to block its passage. Boston police quickly arrived on the scene, ordering the pro-choice activists to allow the anti-abortion group to pass. The pro-choice ralliers responded by walking slowly in front of their opposition, sometimes linking arms to keep the anti-abortion group from passing. Because neither group had a permit to organize on the street, the police ordered both crowds to remain on the sidewalk. When both groups began to spill onto the street, however, only pro-choice demonstrators were arrested. Susan Yano, a member of R2N2 and one of the organizers of the pro-choice event, told *GCN*, “It’s clear that the police had an agenda, which was to allow [the anti-abortion group] to march to the clinic unimpeded.”

Sheila Parks, one of the activists arrested, agreed that the action by the police seemed unwarranted. “[They] had absolutely no legitimate reason to arrest us,” she told *GCN*. “Neither group had permits. For them to

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Disability rights activists hold historic Pride Day



MARILYN HUMPHRIES

BOSTON—In the tradition of the gay pride and Black power movements, the first-ever Disability Pride Day was held here Oct. 6. More than 400 people marched, drove, wheeled and moved from City Hall to Boston Common in a demonstration to affirm that, “far from tragic, disability is a natural part of the human experience,” according to the platform statement by the Disability Pride Day Coalition.

Sponsored by a broad coalition of social service and activist groups, including the Boston Center for Independent Living, the AIDS Action Committee, and the Disabled People’s Liberation Front, the event marked “the next step in the disability rights movement,” organizer Amy Hausbrouk told *GCN*. “It’s about pushing the boundaries, now that the Americans with Disabilities Act has passed,” said Hausbrouk, who is a blind bisexual woman.

Other sponsors included the Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities, DEAF, Inc., the Boston Self-Help Center, the Spinal Cord Injury Association, the Massachusetts Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, Independence Associates, the Greater Framingham Independent Living Program, the Southeast Center for Independent Living, UMass/Boston Disabled Student Services, Ministry for Disabled Persons, the Epilepsy Foundation, and the People with AIDS Coalition.

“It was great,” said Carrie Dearborn, a lesbian with disabilities. “It was like Gay Pride, when there are so many gay people around you can imagine what the world would be like if gay people were in the majority,” she told *GCN*. “I could almost imagine that I was in the majority.”

“When you are disabled, a lot of people patronize you,” said Dearborn, adding, “When I drove down Boylston Street with a friend of mine who also uses a chair, people got the fuck out of our way.”

Pride demonstrations, said Hausbrouk, are “a way for a group to shed internalized oppression. If you hear from day one that disability is tragic, a curse from God, and to hope for a cure, you have a very real experience of ‘defectiveness.’” She added, “People in the community lie along a continuum of very deep self-hatred and very great pride.”

Speakers at the demonstration included John Hockenberry, a wheelchair user from National Public Radio, Lori Stewart, from the Disabled Women’s Political Alliance, and Steven Bachner, of the Low-Incidence Disabilities Organizing Project.

One speaker who was absent from the rally was Sharon Kowalski, a lesbian with disabilities whose battle for self-determination has sparked a coalition between disability rights and gay rights groups. Kowalski was barred from the event by Minnesota judge Robert Campbell, who has scheduled a hearing for Oct. 12 to determine guardianship of Kowalski, the latest development in the protracted legal battle between Kowalski’s lover, Karen Thompson, and her parents. (See *GCN*, Sept. 30). Although Kowalski had expressed a desire to attend Disability Pride Day, Campbell ruled that “It was not in Sharon’s best interest” to leave the state for the event. Thompson spoke in her place.

Laura Briggs

GCN JOB OPENINGS

Staff Writer/Circulation Co-Coordinator

Available in November. Research, investigate and write news stories about Boston/New England and also stories with a national scope. May include some analytical/feature writing as well. Share responsibilities with other staff writer for coordinating weekly mailing of paper and processing subscriptions.

Qualifications: Strong writing skills and ability to write several stories under weekly deadline pressure. Knowledge of local/national lesbian and gay community and issues helpful. Strong organizational and record keeping skills and knowledge of data entry and/or computers also helpful.

Deadline for application: November 1, 1990.

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All GCN positions require commitments to lesbian/gay liberation, feminism, anti-racism, an awareness of class issues, and a commitment to collective decision-making.

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To apply: Please send resume and cover letter to: GCN Jobs, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. Questions? call 426-4469

GCN Editorial Guidelines

The "Community Voices" and "Speaking Out" sections in GCN are parts of our efforts to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed within our pages. We welcome all contributions except personal attacks. Copies of letters and "Speaking Out" contributions sent elsewhere are printed on a space available basis only. GCN reserves the right to edit letters and "Speaking Out" contributions for length and clarity, in consultation with the author. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN staff or membership.

All letter and "Speaking Out" contributions must be TYPED and DOUBLE-SPACED. Letters can be NO LONGER THAN TWO PAGES. Speaking Out" contributions can be NO LONGER THAN FOUR PAGES and require a short (one to two sentence) biographical note about the author for inclusion at the end of the article.

Because GCN wishes to encourage dialogue and a diverse representation of perspectives on the letters pages, printing of "Speaking Out" contributions received from authors who have had other "Speaking Outs" appear in GCN recently may be postponed temporarily.

For editing purposes, it is helpful to be able to contact you easily — please enclose your name, address, and daytime phone number with your letter or article. Thanks.

Send to: Community Voices/Speaking Out, GCN, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

The opinions expressed in "Speaking Out" contributions are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN staff, Board or membership.

Consulting Cincinnati

Dear GCN:

John Zeh's report on the gay/lesbian courthouse protests planned for Cincinnati for September 24th (see GCN, Sept, 16-22) is inaccurate and inadequate at best. Indeed, it seems deliberately biased. The report gives the impression Ted Good and Stonewall Cincinnati have been prominent in opposing homophobic reactions to the Mapplethorpe photos. In reality, Stonewall has, as usual, avoided an upfront activist response. GLMA (Gay Lesbian March Activists, founded by Shane Que Hee after the March on Washington and now ably chaired by Scott MacLarty) has been the central force in opposing Simon Leis's homophobic steamroller. Cincinnati Act Up (initially part of GLMA, now calved off, and effectively led by Carol Lippmann and Todd Kamm) enthusiastically built momentum for the September 24th protest. Kim Henson, leader of Voice against Censorship, rallied artists.

All the above, and more, is explained in detail in the gay/lesbian paper, *Nouveau Midwest*,

published in Cincinnati. Does John Zeh wish to inform himself and his readers? If so, he should consult Cincinnati sources capable of providing unbiased, authentic, accounts. Cincinnatians who spent so much money and so many hours over so many year's defending John Zeh from homophobic Simon Leis, while Stonewall Cincinnati's board (including Ted Good) sat on their collective asses, deserve the best John Zeh is capable of giving!

Robert B. McNee
Los Angeles, Calif.

Coming out the second time around

Dear GCN:

When I entered prison, both my pride in my gayness, and my courage failed me. The aura of the place had me lying through my teeth in only a few moments. During the intake interview, where I was asked about my religion and my sexual preference, the lies came easily, this big, bad and proud gay wiccan became a straight christian. I began to play out the fiction I'd created for myself, hating every moment, and my own cowardice. Even my nights were damned, as soon as my eyes closed, the nightmares began.

I took to drinking jailhouse hooch to ease the pain, when I could afford it, I'd buy drugs, I was desperate to escape the suffering. This went on for around two years, years of destructive self hatred and substance abuse.

For me, the end of the hiding began when I began writing poetry, and for me, the words wouldn't lie, what I was came out in every word. Writing eased the pain, healed wounds both old and new, I couldn't give it up, but to continue would give me away. In a way, the whole experience was like a trip through time, back to the pain filled days before I came out the first time, which had also been a period filled with suffering, lies and drugs. When this knowledge hit me, the shock was intense, I made up my mind to do what it took to get back to who I was.

My path to this was a quiet one, I began to send my writing out, to share it with those who were my friends, or what passes for friends in prison. When asked, I admitted that I was gay, and left it at that. Outwardly, my life changed very little, those who had a problem with my admission drifted out of my circle, the snide remarks and harassment were very subdued, truth is, nobody really cared. To be honest, being 6'2", 300 lbs., didn't hurt either, as during my drinking phase I'd gotten a very nasty reputation.

The difference inside of me is tremendous, the feeling of freedom is if possible more intense than it had been the first time around. I'm mature enough now to understand how vital it is to be myself, and how little of me is alive when the lies and fear take over.

Vernon Maulsby
Box 244
Graterford, PA 19426

Protect the public

Dear GCN:

I was very distressed to read the recent GCN article by [Laura] Briggs (August 17 - 31) on therapist-client sex. Therapist-client sexual contact is not a debatable issue. Those of us who have studied this problem have unequivocally demonstrated that *sexual involvement with therapists is harmful* to clients: 90% suffer ill effects, 11% are psychiatrically hospitalized, and 1% commit suicide. Sexual abuse of clients is also not confined to the heterosexual community - 15% of cases are lesbian and 5% gay.

The proposed legislation is not, as Hubbard has suggested, designed to bring police and judges into our bedrooms. Rather it is intended to protect the public from abusive practitioners who are incapable of understanding their responsibility to help rather than harm their clients.

Sincerely,
Nanette K. Gartrell, M.D.
San Francisco, Calif.

Crime: being Black and gay

Dear GCN:

We as gay men and women share alot of feelings for those that we care for, and at various times have answered the call to arms, so to speak, to defend our communities or speak out concerning our rights and the freedom of choice

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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Women, Gay Men and Lesbians are standing together.

By Molly Yard and Urvashi Vaid

to be what we were born to be without fear of degradation by those of alternate life styles. If I were asked to define gay in single words, I would say passionate, strong, proud, loving, and the most talented group of people of any lifestyle. But that is not what I want to talk about, I want to talk about prison, gay prison, because gay is what I am, and prison is where I'm at.

To begin with let's be friends, my name is Edward Love, I'm a 36 year old man of mixed black and Puerto Rican blood, an ex-teacher of special education, a vietnam vet, gay and if I may be modest, an attractive man in a masculine way.

I am presently in a Nebraska prison but am from NY, PA, D.C., MA area, and in fact, had not ever heard of Nebraska until being stuck here with car problems and ended up in prison because my crime in fact was being black and gay. I'm serving 3 years for assualting two people who thought "Nigger Queers" were safe to harass.

In this prison system there are 748 inmates, of that number there are to my knowledge 18 gays who openly confess to being gay. I am the only black man, and I survive on skills I acquired growing up on the streets of NY, I'm a fighter, and since this is known in the prison, I'm no fun.

For the longest time, I used to hear people use terms like "happy as a fag in a men's prison." Well I'd like for all to know that there is no happiness in the prison life of gay men, there is no romantic scenery of being stranded on an island full of beautiful bodies and fantasy sex. In truth, prison makes being gay mean, brutal, lonely, and very scared. People in the free world never hear of the things inside of these walls like being awakened in the night by guards who want you to perform one sexual act or another for him under threats of bodily harm, no one sees or reads how most of the gay population is so afraid and tired of being robbed and beaten just because of being what they are that they end up having to submit to having jailhouse pimps who in return for his protection sells their bodies and have no choice but to submit or else finding that they are alone and unprotected. You never hear the cries the walls seem to transmit each night from one gay man or another being sodomized with things like broom handles, or pool cues.

In prison, gay is a crime, and one that carries a life sentence because you pay for it day after day. I'm a fighter, but in the last 2 years I've seen many that were not, some have just accepted this degradation because of fear, many have just curled up inside and are now on the psychiatric units, and a couple have cheated the system by death.

Over the last two years, I've learned to be my own best friend, mainly because the only things that I have in here of my own are my mistakes and good memories that fade more and more each day and most of my loneliness. I never pictured myself in prison and from the crimes of most of the gay men here neither did they, but the one thing all of us had in common was disappointment, all of us had jobs, friends and families in our communities, even lovers, but coming to prison erased all of that by doing things like painting us as immoral creatures, by deaming us worthless, and in most cases of friends and families, "it's out of sight, out of mind."

People like myself need to know that there are people who still care, to give us the motivation to keep going day after day. We need to be loved just as those who are free, and we need friends to talk with and share a little with through simple letters. But most of all we want to be remembered and thought of because inside of you, and regardless of social status, you are not, as proven by the Hitlers in our history, exempt by this form of social racism, and authoritative hatred in our prisons as well as our politics.

Edward Love
39369
Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68502

Hard meat running loose

Dear GCN:

I have just read your September 9-15 newspaper and I have found it to be very good to my senses, "Thank you" very very much!!!

Of course, I have requested that my friend be so good as to come out of his closet far enough to let me get his copy each time he gets one. I'm glad to hear of such great leaps for our (Gay men & women) rights as people, are being sought. I'm 30 years old as of last August 24th and have been gay since I was fifteen. I'm doing time in Florida and won't get out until 1993. I'm an open queer or punk as we girls are called here. My lover is not very frequent to jump in bed and with all this hard meat running loose I stay on edge yet am not allowed to touch any other than my husband. At any rate I should live, he is fairly good to me in respect to what I see the rest of my sisters going through. I see the attention you give to

Washington, D.C., Sept. 20, 1990. The 1990s present a political landscape of both frustration and renewed hope. The civil rights successes of our movements have generated a right-wing backlash that has targeted gay men and all women for special attack. The right to privacy for women and gay men has been seriously eroded — both in *Bowers v. Hardwick* and in recent attacks on *Roe v. Wade*. Yet these setbacks have inspired a surge of grassroots activism in the progressive community, and particularly in the feminist and lesbian and gay communities.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) are at the forefront of grassroots organizing in our respective communities. We recognize we must stand together, steadfast on our diverse yet inextricably connected issues.

One of our greatest challenges as political movements is to resist the urge to protect only our own. The "me first" mentality of the 1980s is a death knell for the coalition politics of the 1990s. We can no longer afford the "divide and conquer," single-issue focus that hobbled us in the past.

We must draw connections between the discrimination we face and learn the commonality in the liberation we seek. We have seen from the explosion of the right wing that unity is power. We too must grow in our level of cooperation and mutual support in the progressive community.

Today, the ties between the feminist community and the lesbian and gay community are stronger than ever. NGLTF and NOW have been close allies because our struggles for equal rights, privacy and individual freedom are one struggle. The stakes have never been higher.

Abortion rights, the "do or die" issue for feminists in the 1990s, have received strong support from the lesbian and gay community. Feminists, lesbians and gay men understand the ability of women to control their sexual and reproductive lives free from dictate of the church and the state is exactly the freedom gay and lesbian people seek. On this issue, on the repeal of *Hardwick* and all intrusive sodomy laws, we must fight against the imposition of state-sanctioned controls on our most private, intimate decisions.

NOW and NGLTF are allies on a host of

those of us that are locked away in prison, and thank you for it, for we have no rights in here, this is "red neck country." Discrimination as well as homophobia hang like pea soup each and every day, which makes for some real long days. Again I thank you for the fresh air your paper gives me!!!

James (Jessica) Bumer
080092 E-83
Baker Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 500
Olustee, Fla. 32072

Love in prison

Dear GCN:

It was in 1986, after I had been in prison for six years that Ray entered the compound. At first, I really didn't care because six years of constant exposure to the cruelties of prison had turned me into a cold and uncaring shell of a human being.

However, a few weeks after Ray arrived, my supervisor called me into his office and explained that he was re-assigning Ray to work outside with me, because his presence was creating problems for both staff and inmates.

You see Ray was gay. And what that meant was torment. It meant if he layed a cup of coffee down, it was to get spit in. It meant making fun of him and jokes about him 7 hours out of a 7 1/2 hour day. It meant hitting him when the cop wasn't looking, and pinning signs, and stuff on his back. In short, it meant hating him for no other reason other than he was different.

After Ray and I were assigned to work together, we became friends. He would share his experiences with me in life of non acceptance and ostracization, and the more we shared, the more I realized how much alike we were in a world that had turned its back on us. We became very close friends through our mutual understanding. For the first time in many years, I found I could care for someone other than myself.

However in late 1987, disaster began to strike. One day at work, Ray started to become ill. It

other issues. We are members and co-founders of the Gay and Lesbian Military Freedom Coalition, which fights the blatantly homophobic policies of the U.S. Armed Forces. As one of the largest employers in the world, the military's active and institutionalized discrimination against lesbians and gay men is as outrageous as it is useless.

The military is also one of the last bastions of legal discrimination against women. Not only are women three times more likely to be discharged for homosexuality, but they are also denied entrance into half of all jobs in the military by combat exclusion laws and regulations. Pushing the U.S. military to practice the values they allegedly defend requires the growing, resolute coalition we have begun to build.

Health care is another area where feminist and lesbian and gay concerns overlap. The spiraling costs of insurance and resulting inaccessibility of health care have placed a national health care system at the top of our agendas. People with HIV and AIDS, women and children, people of color, people with disabilities, and people living in non-traditional families whose partners are ineligible for employee health benefits, are disproportionately represented among the 37 million Americans with no health insurance, and the nearly 70 million underinsured.

Breast cancer and other gynecological cancers are a major concern of the women's movement in general, and indeed are of special concern of the lesbian community. Studies show that women who do not have children or have children later in life are at higher risk for certain gynecological cancers. Lesbians are also less likely to get regular gynecological exams. They forego early diagnosis for fear of homophobia or because they do not need regular prescriptions for contraception that often motivate heterosexual women to see a doctor.

The struggle to secure an adequate federal and state response to AIDS remains a priority for the lesbian and gay movement in the second decade of the epidemic. AIDS is also a feminist concern as the incidence of HIV among women, particularly women of color, continues to rise while resources available to women with AIDS remain grossly inadequate. We must fight together

started at about 10am. By 2pm it was necessary for me to get the cop to send Ray to the prison clinic.

I saw Ray again at 5:30 and he told me that he was going to be transferred to the Dallas hospital for a few days, but not to worry, he would be back.

However at 6pm, I watched Ray handcuffed led to solitary confinement. During the next couple of days, I found out that Ray had been thrown in a cell, and was being given aspirin and was becoming quite ill. I began to become quite concerned, and tried with all my might to get Ray medical care.

There was a new Lt. that had arrived a few months before with whom I had some rapport, and so I told him there was a person who was ill, and locked up for no reason. I told the Lt. that he was my friend and if anything happened to Ray because of denial of medical care, I would write *GCN* , and everyone to let them know what was up. The Lt. promised to look into it.

The next day Ray was air lifted to the federal medical center for prisoners at Springfield, MO.

For almost a year, Ray was gone, and I felt like I had lost a part of my life. Then he returned. He was brought back on a returning airlift by a Lt. who was to present me with the greatest challenge of my life.

Ray got back at about 3:30pm. I was overjoyed. We said hello, and promised to meet at 5 for the meal together. When we entered the chow hall at 5:00, Lt. Dickerson, who had picked up Ray, told me he didn't want to see me, or anyone around Ray, because Ray had AIDS and he didn't want anyone to die. The Lt. said this loudly in front of a mess hall of about 100 inmates. Because of that, plus other similar incidents, it was common knowledge that Ray was sick with AIDS, and the cruel and ostracizing treatment really began.

During that time I prepared a lawsuit for Ray against the officers for needless disclosure of his medical status. Citing an invasion of privacy by this disclosure, the suit was taken home with me when I left prison and Ray on August 5, 1989.

I took the suit to Ray Hill, a gay activist and

for adequate funding for care, education and research, for access to promising therapies, for non-discriminatory access to health care. We must ensure that these resources are made available to all affected populations.

Family issues are another area of common interest. The right-wing definition of "traditional family" is aimed at subjugating women. It renders completely invisible lesbian and gay families and ignores the diverse arrangments that make up the majority of American families today.

We must fight together to force this country to recognize, validate and support families in all their diversity. Our agendas include domestic partnership legislation, family and medical leave bills that are substantive and inclusive, and foster care and adoption policies open to all. The education our children receive must address the epidemic levels of teenage pregnancy and lesbian and gay youth suicide.

The gauntlet has been thrown down before feminists, lesbians and gay men in the 1990s. We face enormous obstacles in the fight for a Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights bill and the Equal Rights Amendment, both targeted for passage in this decade. Yet working together, NOW and NGLTF present a formidable force for freedom and are partners in the struggle for equality. It is a fight we intend to win.

Molly Yard is President of NOW and Urvashi Vaid is Executive Director of NGLTF.

host of a radio show in Houston. I also gave a copy to John Barnish, a gay activist attorney and director of AIDS Legal Defense Fund for AIDS Foundation, Houston. They in turn gave copies to the *Montrose Voice*, and *TWIF* magazine, and had a lawyer who specialized in AIDS fly in from Beaumont who agreed to take the case and file it for Ray. He got out September 10, 1990 to NY.

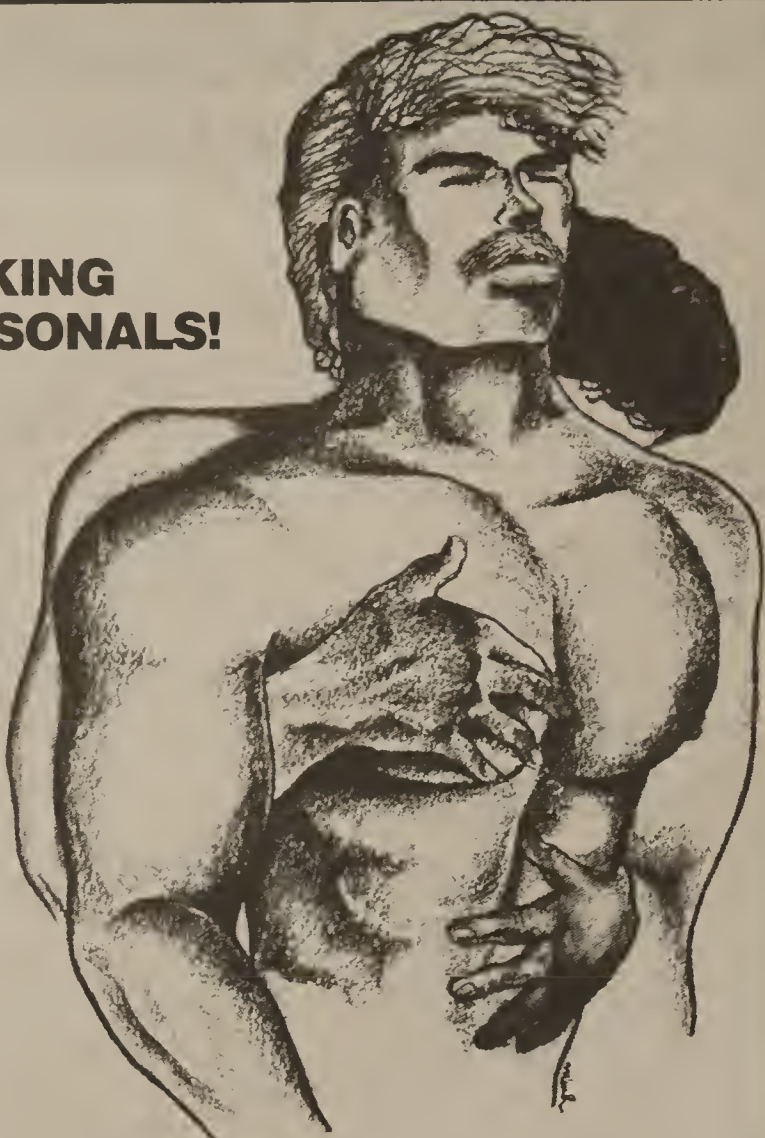
However I found out I just couldn't live without Ray. Twice I attempted suicide, and on October 31, 1989 had a nervous breakdown as a result of depression. Because I damaged property, even though I don't remember, I got 10 years.

Right now I am awaiting transfer back to federal custody for a parole violation hearing. I still hurt terribly, but feel I did the right thing.

Here in state prison until October 31, 1990, I am very alone. I would like to write others who know what its like to care so very much, and yet you can't always get what you really need in this life. If you would like to write, my address is enclosed.

Hugh Burton
543330
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Obscenity

Continued from page 1

subject to criminal action if the court's injunction is violated. In a pre-emptory strike, CAC's attorneys had sought such a hearing, but their suit was thrown out of city court.

Disputing claims that the verdict had only symbolic impact because a conviction would have been overturned on appeal, Brown said, "It has tremendous, real meaning."

He added that the prosecutor's "stock and trade here has always been, 'we're only serving the public, who gives convictions, because, see, this is what the public wants.' That phony bit of baloney is dead, buried. Juries have started to recognize, 'Hey, this is a clever form of Nazism, where they make us be our own executioners.'"

"It's wonderful," said Michael Blankenship, a GLMA supporter and a scenic artist at Playhouse in the Park. "It really is a great day here because the jury worked — despite the efforts of the prosecutor and the judge."

Judge David Albanese was criticized for favoring the prosecution during pre-trial hearings and trial proceedings. In addition, GLMA exposed Albanese's links to county sheriff Simon Leis, Jr., who is blamed for instigating the prosecution under pressure from anti-abortion/anti-obscenity leaders here. The group also documented a history of "homophobic" attacks on arts institutions and activists here by Leis and current county prosecutor Ney. (See **GCN**, Oct. 7.)

Brown knocked Albanese for not dismissing the charge of displaying children after the defense provided un rebutted evidence that the children's mothers had given permission. The Ohio statute forbidding use of naked minors in printed material exempts people who obtain parental permission.

"In the ultimate analysis, the whole thing was essentially homophobic," said Brown, retired counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union. "Had they been heterosexual photos, there would have been no claim of obscenity."

"It's a great relief from a six-month ordeal to have eight regular people see our views," said Blankenship, one of 35 people videotaped at the Sept. 24 march and cited later for "disorderly conduct." All 35 plan to plead not guilty. "If they want court cases," said Blankenship, "they can have them."

ACT UP

Continued from page 1

trials, in which new therapies are tested on volunteers, are often the only way people affected by HIV/AIDS can gain access to experimental treatments.

Attacking the 'quack-busters'

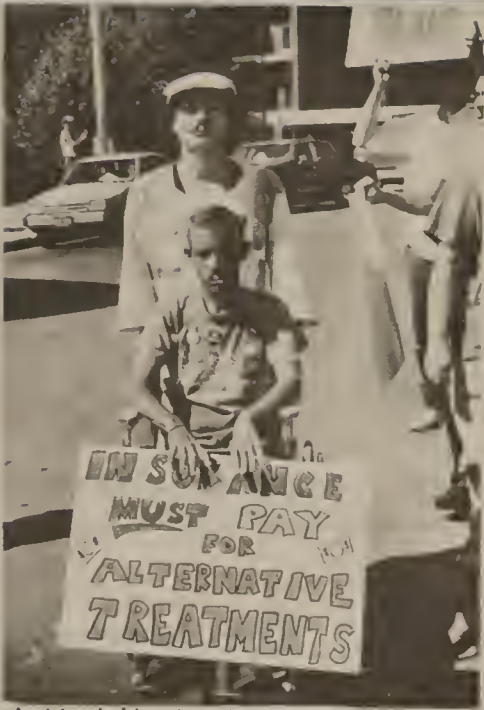
In Kansas City, activists were raising the broader question of the right to choose treatment, whether or not it involves drugs, and whether or not any given treatment has government approval. "This is a vital issue," said Bob Lederer of ACT UP/N.Y., who attended the Kansas City actions. "It's not just about getting drugs released. There are many therapies that don't need FDA approval." Among these therapies, Lederer told GCN, are those that the anti-fraud council is likely to dismiss. Accordingly, he said, one problem that activists were trying to address in Kansas City was the Council's "monopoly over the terminology of 'quackery.'"

In fact, said Lederer, he thought the demonstrations made the point that therapies are not illegitimate simply because a mainstream medical organization denounces them. Referring to conference-goers and the Kansas City public, he said, "we effectively planted the seeds of doubt."

ACT UP/K.C. member Jim Hull agreed with Lederer that the demonstrations had helped discredit the unquestioned pursuit of 'quackery,' and added that he thought the fraud council's days were numbered. "I think the demonstrations served as the beginning of the end for the Council," Hull told **GCN**. At the least, he added, "I don't think they'll ever have their national conference in Kansas City again."

'A real spark'

Activists in Kansas City and San Francisco alike said they were optimistic about the turns AIDS activism is taking in their respective regions. Lein said she thought the treatment-oriented agenda of the Golden Gate group worked well in tandem with the broad, "socially-oriented" project of the San Francisco chapter of ACT UP. (ACT UP/San Francisco recently split into two groups, ACT UP/S.F. and ACT UP/Golden



GENYPHYR NOVAK

Activists held a silent demnstration at Trinity Lutheran Hospital, Sept. 16

Gate.) Because some of the internal tensions of the original group had been resolved by splitting, she said, "separately we're twice as effective."

In Kansas City, where directly confrontational AIDS activism is a younger phenomenon, activists said they thought the anti-fraud council activity had opened up new possibilities for organizing in the Midwest. "It tested the waters for civil disobedience here, and not just in Kansas City," said Hull, adding that he thought places like Oklahoma and Texas would soon begin to feel the effects of the show of determination in Missouri.

Indeed, said Lederer, the September actions were "a real spark of energy."

filed from Boston

Bar

Continued from 3

numbers of Queer Nation had attended the outings; and in some cases the group contacted the police beforehand. At least once before, added Pierce, a plainclothes officer was in attendance at a visibility action.

At the Oct. 6 event, however, the 12 activists were far outnumbered by the 200 or more patrons of the bar, and police had not been notified in advance. Pierce said he thought that the ensuing violence was telling because it was an example of how police and bar staff are likely to behave without external supervision. "This seems to be the more normal reaction," he said.

'Like a striptease'

James Sherman, the manager of Stocks and Bonds, told **GCN** that he thought the behavior of the Queer Nation members was "completely absurd." He said that the activists wrote, "Queer Nation: get used to it" on the bathroom stalls, and "immediately cleared the dance floor."

"They weren't coming in to enjoy the club," said Sherman. "They were coming in to make a big point."

Sherman added that the bouncers began approaching him soon after the Queer Nation people arrived, telling him that patrons were complaining. The setting became particularly tense, Sherman said, when the lesbians and gay men became physically affectionate. "They were grabbing buttocks, kissing with tongues exposed — it was like a striptease with clothes for the homosexuals," he said.

Sherman, who commented that he doesn't allow public displays of heterosexual affection in the bar, said that he let the bouncers in the bar assist the police officer after a Queer Nation member pushed the officer in the chest without provocation. "I wanted to try and maintain the peace," he said.

'Worthwhile tactic'

Pierce, meanwhile, said that while he had once been skeptical about visibility actions, he now believes in their effectiveness as a tool to educate heterosexuals about the existence of lesbians and gay men. "The reaction before was so mild," he said, referring to earlier Queer Nation outings to such places as the Hard Rock Cafe on Clarendon Street. "I was beginning to feel that there was no point. This makes me feel like there is. It's a very worthwhile tactic."

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Coming Out Stories

The following collection of stories reflects the adage that coming out is a lifelong process. Submitted by readers, volunteers and the occasional GCN staff member, these tales are filled with the humor and pathos of daily lesbian and gay life. They are testimony to the fact that not everyone is at exactly the same place in her or his coming out history, that at any moment in time someone somewhere is coming out to herself, or his family or friends, or maybe even to strangers who need to know that there is a gay or lesbian person in their presence.

These are also the first coming out stories to appear in the pages of GCN in a number of years, and we plan to print more on a semi-regular basis. That's because at any given moment someone somewhere needs to read about what the process has been like for someone else, whether she's picking up a queer newspaper for the first time in her life or he's a seasoned activist in need of a battery re-charge.

We hope you enjoy these stories and we'd like to thank our contributors for sharing them with us. We'd also like to encourage you to submit a coming out story of your own for inclusion in upcoming issues. Send your stories (1-3 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, if possible) to GCNFeatures, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. Please mark your envelope "submission."

I tossed to the far side of the bed for the final time and reached for the alarm clock by the bed. There had been little point in setting it when sleep was as elusive as it had been tonight. I am in love with a woman and today was the day I would share that fact with the most important person in my life.

I tried hiding my head under the pillow. The attempt to block out both the sun's brightening rays and my own thoughts failed miserably. I could no longer explain away the nights of passion with Sally by using the flimsy excuses of too much wine or curiosity. These rang as hollow now in my head as they did when I said them to her last night.

I felt a bit unsteady as I got out of bed and reached into the closet for my robe. I stared blankly at the rack of clothes and pondered the statement "coming out of the closet." I enjoyed the irony of the situation while I again considered all the implications.

Thinking was no longer the answer either. It was feelings that counted. Finally acknowledging what I felt was right down to the marrow of my bones would take a measure of courage I was unsure I had. But denial was no longer an option. So I walked down the hall, turned on the light and said to my rumpled reflection, "Yes, you are a lesbian."

Barbara A. Prato, Staten Island, N.Y.

I am in love with a woman and today was the day I would share that fact with the most important person in my life.

The dance floor is hexagonal, bouncing plexiglass on which slim-hipped, tanned young men, their long hair greased back or in ponytails, or cropped fashionably short, gyrate, prance and strut, their white Adidases flashing beneath gleaming muscles that flex and tease beneath black spandex and soft jeans. The boys' eyes glide sideways, but their crotches meet, eye to



eye. Get down, gyrate, feel the beat, side to side.

"Come on, come on, come on, come on, everybody." The ceiling releases smoke, blinding some, sending others reeling off the dance floor. For some, it's an excuse to pull out white powder or sniff some poppers. Some of us exit to the deck, to another kind of party, where boys, all clean, toothy, dark, holding drinks, smile at the mirror air, waiting for somebody. Everyone looks so conservative, so well.

Over the circle of our champagne air, the night is gray black, uninviting, no sliver of light amid the distant pitch clouds that sift in the sky searching for the moon. The tune of our glimmering chatter and clinking glasses rises up to ancient abandoned buildings that surround the bar; their facades of broken windows, uncompromising in their sameness, make me think of a concentration camp. We are the colorful inmates, but who is the gestapo out there?

No way out of here. But, appropriately, a tall pipe, like the Provincetown tower, our own tower in New Haven, rises out of the dreary mist to kiss heaven.

Time is getting wild below as two women thrash in the deck's whirlpool. One has removed her shirt, so her nipples point out of her wet, see-through bra into the perking water. Both women wear drunken leers; arms extended, they hold smokes and sip on beers. One hoots while raising a soaked, jeanied leg in the air. Men turn, laugh, hysterical.

Provincetown, 1973, the year I came out and ran away. The Back Room walls were made of wood then — no mirrors or tacky black — and a fireplace sat in the middle of the dance floor. Sundays, a few of us sat, sipping cognacs, staring into lascivious flames while listening to opera, Puccini and Vivaldi. Back then ours was a simple world, and snow blew soft and blue around us. Late, after the bars would close, even in

February, I would be among those who stripped down to the bone and leapt into the bay.

Nothing could touch us. I was the newest trick in town, had run away from home late, at 19, after an affair in college with the senior class president and getting expelled for drinking and drugs. A genius failure, who would not do the work I was supposed to do anymore. I was tired of my parents, of expectations, of having held on tight through the sixties while the rest of my family went mad. I had been the oldest, the smartest. When I stepped away from the old influence to go to college, I lost myself, but found a man.

I lost the past in 1973. Slept with seven men my first month in P-town, November, as the world sealed tight and left us brooding innocents at its shivering tip to fry in each other's blood through the long, cold winter.

I learned to shoot pool.

I learned to come.

And I learned to drink, and stay high, and feel good about it because I was still young.

Through the winter, every night was Saturday. We danced to Barry White and Donna Summer and "The Love I Lost." And went home late, prowling the quiet street like restless dogs looking for a home. Everywhere was home, every bed, my own. In those days I had to get up for nothing but snow, or walking along Herring Cove — to feel coldness on the soles of my feet, and to let the salty wind sear my head, or to collect beach glass. Or go for morning coffee with a friend, or a book. We lived in sweatshirts and jeans. A cock, a pen, a glass in hand, I lived elementally, tracing my passage into manhood, through passion, to despair, and out again to nowhere.

I lived in a basement apartment on Wharf's Court. Upstairs, a tiny alcoholic named Lily, who'd once lived in the Village, wrote boozy poems a la Dorothy Parker — one of them about a young man with a string

of lovers going in and out of his apartment, downstairs. All day, Lily, blackish hair frazzled, with her silky red robe half open, shot glass of bourbon in hand, tripped out, calling her cats. She had eight of them — "Yoo hoo, Ta-luuuu-lah! Where are you!"

I married Dan one Spring evening on the beach outside the Pied Piper. I should say, a drunken preacher married us. And we exchanged rings, and lived together for four raucous years. Drunk and fought and fucked until there was no more of that in us. After we separated, I sobered up and started writing, he went to Ogunquit to paint with our golden, Junior.

1990 seems long removed from all that. Although the beat goes on. And love, despite AIDS, and rumors of a collective death, beats on, no less potent through the night. Desire is here to stay.

I look younger than I did in the years when booze and late nights were my best friends. I'm in better shape, can dance

Debbie said to me, "I want you to know you're homosexual," and I flipped out.

harder, make love longer. Men love the way I move because I'm not ashamed of my body, but I don't flaunt it either. I let it flow, yet control, holding back, like a wave. I let men come to me.

This wasteland encircling us in this glitzy new bar entices me. What is up there? I can look up and ask this question of the world today. Today there is more than my skin, more than my cock, although I have lost the boy's hope that everything in the world, both luscious and holy, was meant to be eaten by me today.

"Romantic up there, isn't it," a blonde blue eyed angel asks me.

"It is. And I don't know why."

"It's all the redecorating possibilities."

And we laugh. His name is Tony. He buys me a Saratoga. On the rocks. And we dance. He vogues to Madonna. And I watch. Plump baskets in soft denims, rolling. Rips at the knees. I keep controlled, turn, as he watches.

As he watches. I caress the idea of my tight butt and flat stomach, hairy chest, and ripe balls that I will give to this man in a little while. My short cropped black hair emits tiny seductive beads of sweat which run down my forehead and outline my cheek. I smile, and I am never off, after years of practice, of being married to the beat.

Alan Breton,
Bridgeport, Conn

I was working at a cafe in New Hampshire when a woman came in soliciting perfume and cologne orders from the customers. Then she started asking the staff and when she asked me if I wore cologne I said "Not really." She said, "How about perfume for your girlfriend?" I told her I didn't have a girlfriend.

As I turned around to walk away she said, "That's because you don't wear cologne." I turned back and said, "No, that's because I'm gay."

Lenny Goldstein,
Boston, Mass.

My very proper older sister knew I was a lesbian but she hadn't seen me since I had really blossomed into the S/M scene.
When she saw me for the first time in two years, I watched her get increasingly aware of my "new look." I told her she should take comfort in the fact that my nosering matched my earring and that one of my tattoos matched my bright red nail polish, as if we could relate about my ability to accessorize. But when I hinted that I was into the S/M scene I watched it slowly dawn on her as she shouted, "You didn't have your nipples pierced?"
My girlfriend started laughing and my sister chased me all over the room, trying to pull up my shirt to see my rings. She kept acting shocked and saying that I was "going to ruin the family name" but, she said with relief, "at least you're now painting your fingernails."
Wickie Stamps
Dorchester, Mass.

... I had just recently gotten my left nipple pierced, so I figured I'd tell him about it before he noticed it.

I'm in dire need for some advice. I've been locked-up since 84. I've seen and talked with alot of homosexuals. I haven't never been with another man before and sexually was never ever entered my mind.
Well, there's a friend of my here named Rodney and I've been knowing him quite some time. He's kinda like my little brother.

get her to say the "L" word. Finally she said, "Women in this town think that means you're a lesbian."
After a very long silence she asked, "Are you?"
I said, "Yes."
She said, "I knew that."
And I said, "Then why didn't you tell me?"
Peg Preble
Brookline, Mass.

I am a 34 year old white male and I have been in prison for 16 years. And I will be getting out in a couple year's.
I want your readers to see how homosexuals are abused, in the Oklahoma prison system.
All my life I have received abuse because I am gay. I was kicked out of the Marines, after doing a full tour in Vietnam, and receiving scrap metal in my back and neck. I was booted out because I was caught in a homosexual act. And disgraced in the eyes of my family, they haven't talked to me since. We were a military family for four generations.
I was out of the Marines for a year and I was in prison. Bogus checks, larceny of a house, petty larceny, burglary, etc. Just a bunch of petty crimes. But I needed help, not to be put in prison for most of my adult life. Sure crime has got to be dealt with in a harsh way, and I was guilty.
But the punishment I have received is far too severe.
While in prison, humiliated, disgraced, exposed as a no good fucking dick sucker, assaulted, abused to a point where I have lost all self-esteem and can't stand myself. There are times that I just want to lay down and die.
Three weeks ago I was raped, robbed of all that I had. Beat to a point where I just passed out. The guards that took me back to Protection said that there was no use in trying to find my property, they said shit you can just sell some of that fine ass that you got and you will have it back in no time. Well I am in a single cell where no one can get to me, and that is going to be the way that I will do the rest of my time, or I will die this way.
I hurt inside from all the pain. I just wanted some friends. And to be recognized for what I am, a homosexual. Not some freak show.
If this was to happen on the streets, the hole country would yell out for some justice. Well

normal."
He was trying to help me handle my feelings while aparently getting ready to puke. After that he never made eye contact or spoke with me again.
Jim Kiely
Somerville, Mass

Around 1974 I was going out with this guy when I met this woman, Debbie, who was like a friend-of-a-friend. We hit it off instantly, but I thought we were "just friends." So, one night we went out and got drunk and I went back to my car and passed out. Debbie came out to the car after the bar closed and she told me to drive to this house and we went inside. It turns out Debbie didn't even know who lived there.

Well, we started flirting with the man who lived there and when we left Debbie said to me, "I want you to know you're homosexual," and I flipped out.
I got really depressed and moved home and I started dreaming about Debbie all the time and I started persuing her. For years.
After three years we finally had sex and after all of the anticipation it was awful. Eventually she came and lived with me and got a job with a therapist I had seen. He had this file filled with letters to Debbie that I had never mailed. Guess who found my file? When she came home we had this wild and incredible sex.
The living arrangement eventually became unbearable and Debbie moved out. I've never seen her since.
Linda Ready,
Somerville, Mass.

In 1986 I decided to come out to my best college friend (who's a born-again Christian). We used to do a lot of things together and I had just recently gotten my left nipple pierced, so I figured I'd tell him about it before he noticed it.
He thought I was kidding when I told him I'd recently had some "body ornamentation" done. Once I explained to him about the piercing, I decided to go whole hog and tell him about my involvement in leather and S/M and the fact that I did it with other men.
He didn't take it very well but he told me that he would still love me as a friend even though I was "sinning against God." I occasionally get

These four guys started mumbling stuff over the trashy sounds of Sylvester and Bronski Beat like "Het ... het bar ... straight ... fuckin' straight bar." My "girlfriend" pulled away from me and said "What? We're dykes." The most drunk of the four responded, "Nawwh! She's a guy."
I said, "No, I'm not a guy. I get picked up at Buddies all the time but I'm not a guy!"
He said, "Nawwh, you're a guy," again.
I said "I'm a dyke" and to prove it I opened my Gap shirt to show him my beautiful black sports bra (not to mention my bodacious ta-tas). I think I got him there because he hesitated a bit. But then he said, "Aw shit! But you're a guy."
Later that night the guy came back up to me by himself -- his friends were really embarrassed -- and he said "Nawwh, yeah, I mean, I think it's great that there are women here. I mean, we gotta stick togetha."
So now I wonder if by being clearly lesbian in a gay male environment I'm indirectly supporting heterosexual visibility and privilege. You can imagine my hesitance to be visible in a straight environment where people are even less discerning than gay men. This must be how the Indigo Girls feel.
Regina Gillis
Somerville, Mass.

I was at a Warrant concert under the proverbial title of road adviser way stoned out on megadeath doses of LSD drooling over their peach buns dripping sweat oh God this must be paradise with those hard guitar moves when Janiz jumps over with a kick, "What you looking at them guitars for, I am not a weak vocalist!" I said "Oh Fuzz luver I couldn't ignore all them I mean we're not alone" "Oh" he says, pulling out the most gorgeous perfect cock I have ever scene believe me I know my guild when it comes to youth cock, balls and rears. Then he jumps on me pulling me to the floor ripping my cut off shorts (no underwear, honest) while shedding his softy leather silk lined show all pants all the way up my all too willing rectum with everyone watching, on M*TV yet (I guess they went to a commercial break and news)....
Mell V. Green
Winthrop, Mass.

reflections on a lifelong process

He's my best friend. He's my brother and now I want him for my lover.
You know, at first I thought that I've been down for awhile and I'm lusting but when he's down and out I try to cheer him up, when he's sick I find myself trying to take care of him. When he don't eat right I'll shove food down his throat. I even love his Mom and Dad. I want to be with Rodney some kinda bad. Rodney thinks it might hurt our friendship. God only knows I can't love him anymore than I do now. I love this feeling and I'm not going to let it go. I'm just not sure how to go about capturing Rodney's heart, that's where I'm needing help in a bad way. I know there's only a few chosen few that get their special dream, but I'm very determan to win Rodney's heart. I want him to be a part of my life and I want to be a part of his. I sure could use some help in a bad way.
Mike Reynolds
Bunn, N.C.

The first person I ever came out to was my Aunt Connie, who's been single all her life. She told me I should get psychiatric help (and to see a male psychiatrist while I was at it.)
I didn't take her advice. In fact, I'm now an out lesbian therapist helping people come out.
Suzane Dykewomon
Jamaica Plain Mass.

I was 27 when my mother moved to San Francisco and the first time I went to visit her she notice'd I had one earring. She warned me that I should be careful on the streets in the city because "women might get ideas."
It was kind of mean of me but I kept saying, "What do you mean?" I was trying to

am I "not" part of this grate nation? Or is justice and fair play only for everyone else but me? "Where" is "Justice."
I was raped, men forced me to have sex with them two at a time. And took everything that I had. I no longer have a T.V., radio, guitar, fan, I have nothing.
Homosexuals have got to have the same rights that everyone else has. We bleed the same, we work hard, we love, we cry. But we are hurt far too much.
Please, if any readers want to write to me please do and quick, I need your letters. And thank you for reading my letter.
Michael W. Burkhart
P.O. Box 514
Granite, Okla. 73547

I grew up in a small town in Maine and I was a senior in high school in 1977 the year was complicated because my mother had cancer and was receiving hospice care at home. Around town it was sort of an open secret that she was dying.
I was in a communications class, the piont of which was to have 25 high-school kids reveal their innermost feelings and thoughts. I never talked in this class and the teacher, Tom, assumed it was because I was depressed about my mom, which I was, but I was also in love with him.
I had to have a conference with Tom at grade time, he was trying to find out why I didn't talk in class. He told me I could tell him anything at all, but instead of talking about my mother, like as expected, I said, "I can't talk in class, Tom, because every time I look at you I want to kiss you. I want to have sex with you."
He leaned back in his chair, crossed and uncrossed his legs. He stood up, walked around and said, "Oh, that's okay. That's

fire and brimstone letters from him and I always send letters back refuting what he says.
Frank Strona
Dorchester, Mass.

My closet-case "straight" roommate wanted to punch me out and my sister stopped talking to me for two years.
Nancy Peck,
Somerville, Mass.

When I was a senior in high school I visited my college-to-be on "Prospective Students Day" and by chance I wound up rooming with the most openly-gay man on campus, whom I thought was really cute. At the end of the day I was lying on this lumpy cot in his room and he was on his bed. We talked for a while and I asked him what it was like being so out on campus and things like that.
I was dozing off when I heard him ask "Is your bed comfortable?" And I, who was raised well by my mother, said "Yes, thank you," and fell back asleep.
The next morning when I was taking a shower I suddenly realized -- "Oh shit!"
Read Weaver, Boston, Mass.

I was with a quote-unquote girlfriend and we wanted to go to this bar in Boston called Obsessions, but 119 -- this groady scrotie leather bar -- didn't charge a cover, so we went there instead. We had no problems at the door, I guess we passed the Lezzie Litmus Test, so we got a beer and then started hanging out by the pool table. (I had a ponytail and was wearing a black denim jacket and my friend looked "femme.") The gay men in the bar couldn't see my face but it was implanted in hers anyway.

I wrote a letter home to a friend and said "I think I'm bisexual." It turns out all of my friends were disappointed because I hadn't
"I was trying to get my mother to say the 'L' word. Finally she said 'Women in this town think that wearing one earring means that you're a lesbian.'"
done anything about it and they wanted to know what it was like. It made me feel even more nerdy, a sexually unsuccessful bisexual.
Colleen Shea,
Attleboro, Mass.

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MARILYN HUMPHRIES

Maureen Paul (Left) and Sheila Parks are arrested during a pro-choice counter-demonstration, Oct. 6

Abortion

Continued from page 3

have arrested just pro-choice people is an outrage." The arrests, she added, illustrate the continuing "lack of separation between church and state."

According to Parks, the police initially seemed cooperative, but became aggravated just before the arrests were made. "Some of the police seemed to be having as good a time as we were," she said. "And then suddenly the tone changed from a game, and things went off the wall." All of the arrests were made within the first half-mile of the march, but police stayed with the groups throughout the walk, ordering the pro-choice activists to "keep moving," and threatening them with further arrests if they did not comply.

When the marchers arrived in Brookline, police separated a mostly male ACT UP contingent from the remainder of the group, creating a gap between the men and the women, who were forced to stand about 200 feet behind the men. Yano called the action "bizarre" and added, "It really speaks to the phobias and sexism of the police force."

In all, five pro-choice activists were arrested and brought to the Area B Roxbury precinct, where they were each charged with being a "disorderly person" and released on personal recognizance. At an arraignment held on Oct. 10, a Nov. 5 trial date was set.

In spite of the police's actions, the organizers of the demonstration deemed the event successful. Said Yano, "It was the first time we've effectively stopped [the anti-choice activists] from getting to the clinic on time, so we were very pleased with the results."

Similarly, Parks described the rally as being "more confrontative" than others she had experienced, and added that she felt her group had met its goal of giving abortion clients "emotional access" to the clinic. The arrests, she said, served as a reminder of the necessity for further pro-choice actions. "If we have any doubt that women's lives are on the line, then we just have to pay attention to what happened on Saturday. The authorities don't like it when women get a little bit confrontative," said Parks.

In the second pro-choice demonstration of the weekend, a small group of activists stood on the sidelines of the anti-choice "Respect Life" march held on Sunday Oct. 7, near Boston Common. The abortion rights advocates waved placards and chanted at the marchers, several of whom responded with curses, threats and insults. Police again targeted the pro-choice activists, threatening them with arrest when the confrontation became heated.

Participants in the counter-demo had hoped to see a larger turnout to oppose the anti-choice march, which drew 20,000 people, according to police estimates. Said Martha Rapp, one of the abortion rights activists involved in the demonstration, "People are still willing to come out and speak up for choice, but more people need to re-involve themselves with the issue."

Bette

Continued from page 16

She stays in the old days for another number, with a song that, like Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life," is one of the classic saloon songs, Fran Landesman and Tommy Wolfe's "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most." The song has been performed by

many serious and wonderful singers. Barbara Steisand recorded it for her quietly brilliant *Simply Streisand* album but opted not to release it. Helen Merrill has done it compellingly, as has Dardanella. And Betty Carter has stretched it to the infinities of its irony, and actually forces you to hang on the word "hang" until, if you don't know what the song is about, you must be winter-numb. Midler does a nice little intro that none of these other artists do, and her version is straightforward and rather lovely.

She does a fine medley of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart's "He Was Too Good to Me" with Peter Larson, and Josh Rubin's "Since You Stayed Here," a truly poetic song in which a person fills a departed lover in on some things he wouldn't recognize if he returned — including the singer, and her living room: "You'd never recognize the room / the pictures all have different frames now / and all the chairs are rearranged now / Somehow I've thrown out every souvenir / Yes, there have been changes made / Since you stayed here ... You'd never recognize my life / The party-givers know my name now / And when I cry it's not the same now / Somehow — I never waste a single tear / Yes, there have been changes made / Since you stayed here." For some reason Midler takes Lorenz Hart's line, "I was a queen to him / Who's gonna make me gay now?" and substitutes, "I was a queen to him / Who's gonna light my way now?" Maybe she thought the double line was too *entendre*? Or perhaps the prolific Hart left alternate lines?

The majority of the album is not this mellow or this introspective — because, as Midler told Holden in the *Times*, she is a meeting place between two worlds, "a bohemian, artsy downtown world and the other in a middle-class borough like Queens." And much of the album is jumpy pop: "Night and Day" is not the Cole Porter song, but Roxanne Seeman and Billie Hughes' bright little tribute to the old "opposites attract" truism, and "All of a Sudden" is a joyous bouncy song about serendipity in the love market. Julie Gold's "From a Distance," on the other hand, is an icy look at contemporary isolation — "God is watching," yes, but "from a distance."

Midler continues to be true to her roots and the red part of her hair — giving us eclectic mixes of songs of other decades that deserve the adjective *timeless*, and clever songs written by her contemporaries. She and *Some People's Lives* are treasures.

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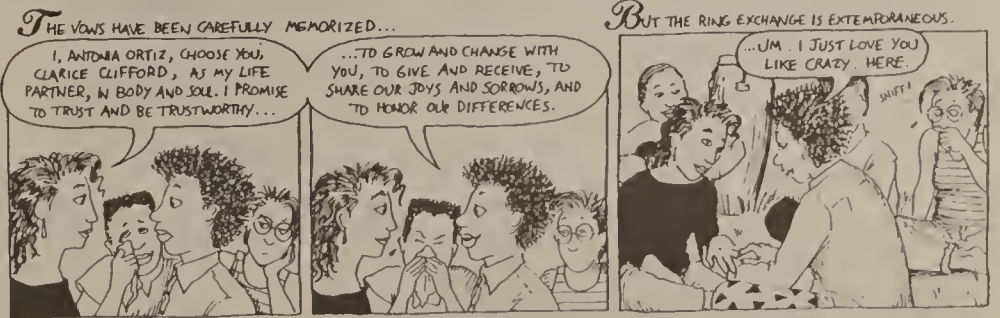
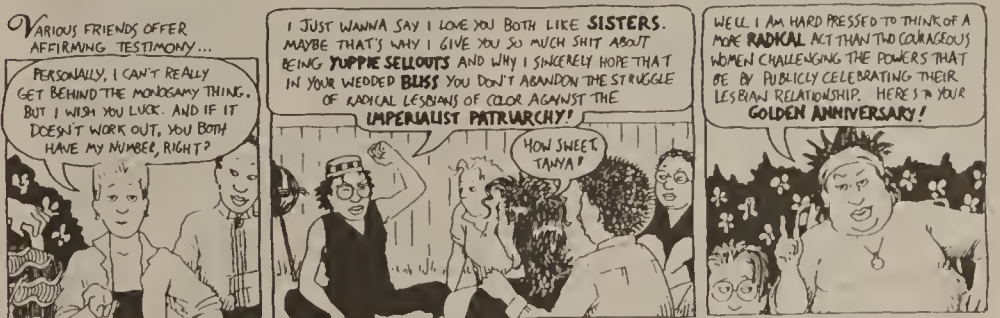
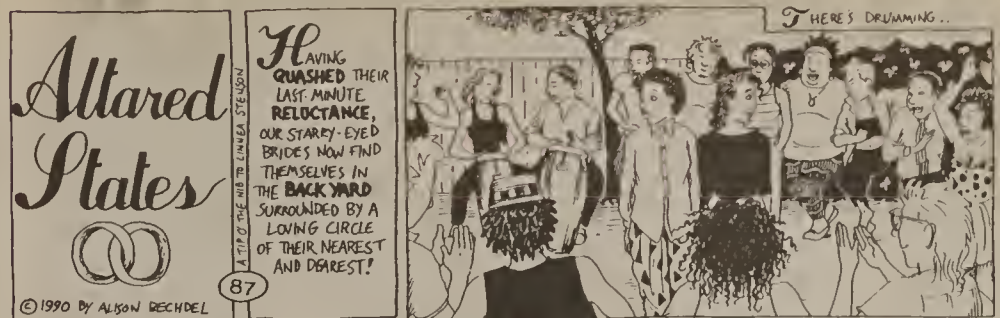
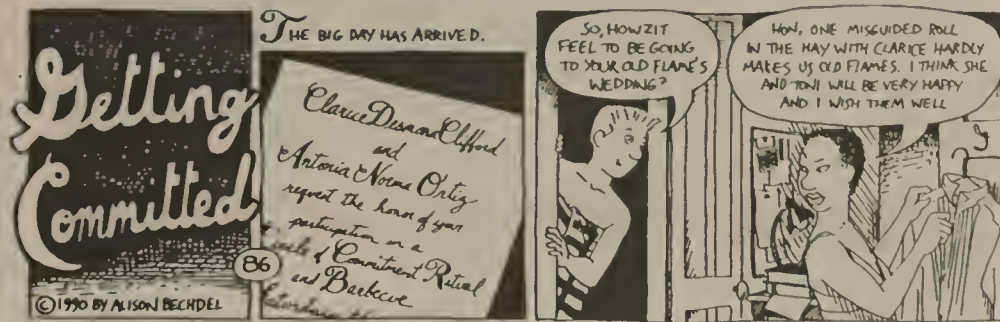
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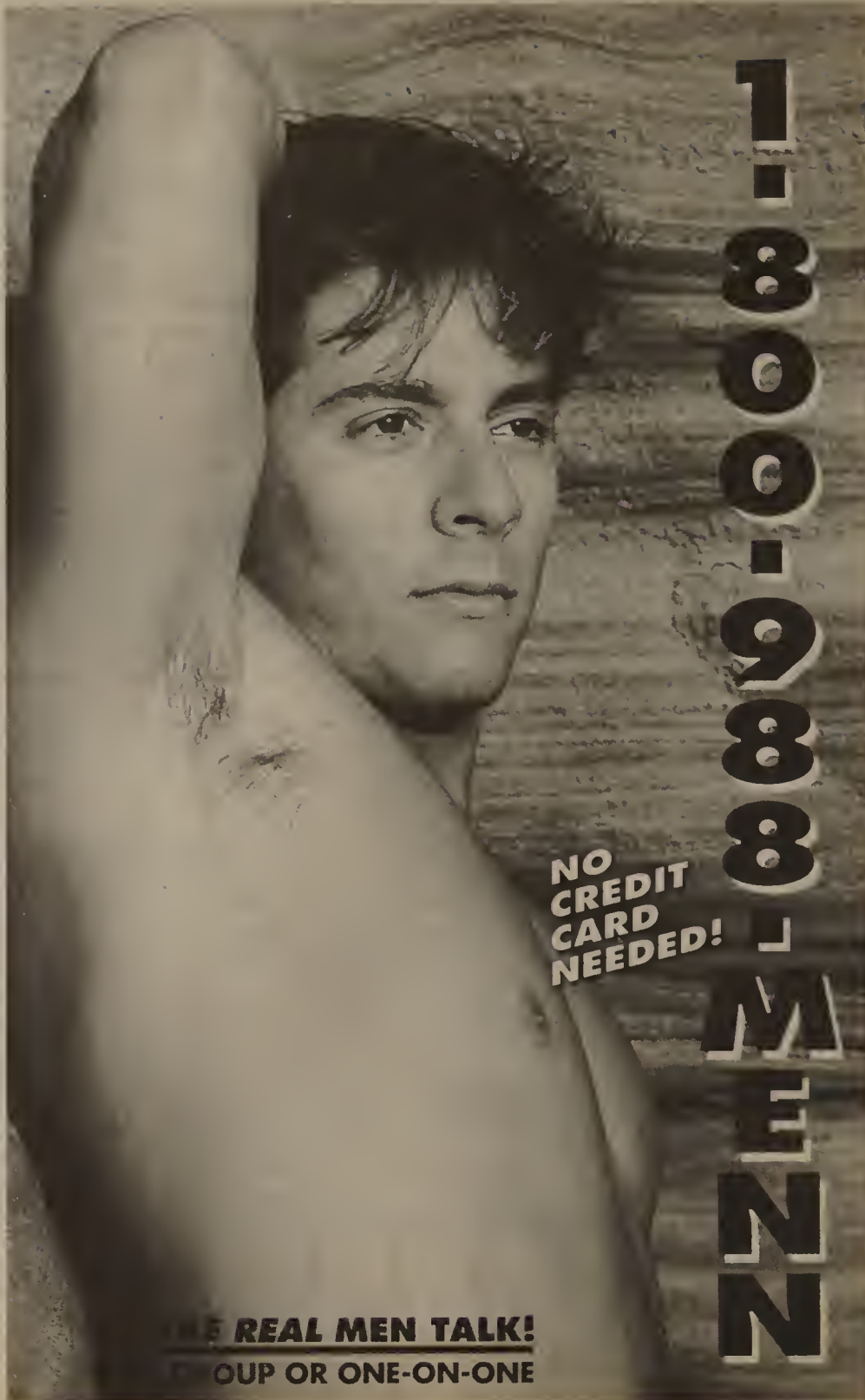
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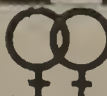
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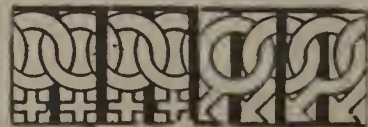
I seek correspondence with a caring, intellectual man, age unimportant. Have photos for photos. Will answer all. Lawrence BRAUTIGAM, #168495, 2-D-575, Moberly correctional Center, Box 7, Moberly MO 65270

I have an imperative need to communicate with the outside world. My interests are many, from building sand castles, to Greek and Chinese philosophy. And as I reach across these miles through the movements of my pen, I hope that I hear from someone this year. David MOORE, #053877, PO Box 747, FL State Prison, Starke, FL 32091-S-3-N-1

I seek strong minded individuals in the free world who will stick with a pen friend in the long run. I'm gay, 28, race and age are unimportant to me. Photo gets photo. Jim FITZGERALD 98743, Box 636, West Liberty KY 41472.



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37 yr old GM Canadian transplant into remodeling/building, classical piano, travel, persons. I'm a heavy fictions consumer and a fair conversationalist. Looking for someone with similar interests for correspondence and possible relationship. Waiting to hear from you maybe. Philip GILLESPIE, 67480, Unit 29 "J", Parchman, MS 38738

I'm currently housed in the "Special" HIV housing unit here. It's very hard to get reading material in here. We have to stay in our cells almost all of the time. This is a fucked up program and I will strive to make these clowns better it. It would be highly appreciated if I could be placed on your penpal list. Thank you. Anthony MANN, SHU 4A-4L-49, D31981, Box 3456, Corcoran CA 93212.

I'm a young black top type gay, built good but lonesome. I'm seeking friendship. I cook and do hobby craft. Looking for gay street friends. John BUTLER, 073072, 33123 Oil Well Rd #009, Punta Gorda FL 33955.

GM, average looks, like outdoors and beaches, looking for someone to correspond with. I would also be interested in receiving your paper if possible. Michael DIEHL, 551784, Ellis II, Huntsville TX 77340.

GM seeking penpal friendship. I like to crochet, listen to music, and watch movies. David BEAN, 15574, Box 1989, Ely NV 89301.

Male prisoner, 35, seeks correspondence from anyone. I have been in prison for 15 years and will never get out, so a relationship is impossible. But our spirits can fly in the night. Please write. Danny HICKS, D-32123, Star Route, Reidsville GL 30499

I would like to be able to correspond with other gays, as serious gays are hard to find in places like this. I'm a masculine gay and prefer men who are likewise. Robert GREGORY, 854666, Box 473, Westville IN 46391

I was beaten (and imagine it may continue since they don't like gays here) and can't get any legal help at all, without money. WITH JUSTICE FOR ALL? I would dearly appreciate a penpal. Do you think you can find me one? Thanks. Ricky LONG, 532731, Box 16, Lovelady TX 75861.

I'm 26 and looking for some male companionship. My home is here in Mississippi. Walter DAVIS, 61056, Unit 29-B, Parchman MS 38738.

GM in prison would like to correspond with other gay men. I'm 43 and goodlooking. A photo would be nice. Thomas MAZZEO, 12 Administration Rd, Bridgewater MA 02324.

I ran across your paper for the first time. It made me feel good to see that I'm not the only one who cares about AIDS in prisons. I'd like to write someone for friendship. I like roller skating, golf and bowling. Richard CRABTREE, 141-195, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699



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Dorchester \ Dorchester GALA Fall Foliage Trip. Meets 9:30 a.m. For meeting place and other info: 825-3737.

Boston \ National Writers' Union First Amendment Reading. "Outrageous and controversial works that Jesse Helms wouldn't like." Community Church, 565 Boylston (Copley T). 2 to 4 p.m. Info: 547-6434.

Boston \ Healing Service for Those Affected by AIDS. Handicap access; ASL interpreted. Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 138 Tremont St. (opposite Park St. T). 4 p.m. Concludes the workshop "Building Communities of Compassion: Action on AIDS for the 90's." Info on this service or registration for the conference: 482-5800.

Cambridge \ Lesbian Singles' Meeting. Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 7 p.m. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

14 SUNDAY

Marblehead \ North Shore Gay and Lesbian Alliance Annual Auction. Ten percent of proceeds to be donated to AIDS Care North and Strongest Link. Info: (508) 927-2903.

Boston \ Candidate's Debate: Representative Byron Rushing (D) vs. Challenger Mike Duffy (R). Sponsored by Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance. 2 p.m. sharp. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. Free. Info: 247-0099.

Danvers \ NSGLA Annual Action. North Shore Lesbian and Gay Alliance, at Unitarian Universalist N. Shore Church, 323 Locust St. Wheelchair accessible. Admission \$3, includes raffle ticket. Info: (508) 745-3848.

Boston \ "Meet the Candidate" Fundraiser for Byron Rushing. Lesbians and Gay Men for Byron Rushing. 199 West Springfield St. 4 to 7 p.m. Info: 536-7551.

15 MONDAY

Arlington \ Sandra Bernhard Double Feature: "Without You I'm Nothing" and "The King of Comedy." Regent Theatre, 7 Medford St. \$4. Times and info: 643-1198.

Back Bay \ Dance for Lesbians, Gay Men, and Friends. Info: 859-9455.

Boston \ Alliance Endorsement Meeting for the November Election. Sponsored by Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance. 7 p.m. Room 222, UMass Boston, Park Square. Info: 247-0099.

Cambridge \ Lesbian Partners and Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Info: 354-8807.

Cambridge \ Gay and Lesbian Academic Study Seminar at M.I.T. Regular meeting. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Info and location details: Ed 547-9487 or Waverly 524-9250. 547-9487 or Waverly 524-9250.

Cambridge \ Lesbian Rap: Children? Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8 to 10 p.m. Info: 354-8807.

16 TUESDAY

Framingham \ Framingham Gay and Lesbian Youth Group. Info: write P.O. Box 426, S. Framingham, MA 01701.

Cambridge \ Bisexual Women's Rap: Diversity in Our Community. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Info: 354-8807.

Boston \ Gay Fathers of Greater Boston: "Suburban Lesbian Moms." Guest speakers. Lindemann Ctr., 25 Staniford St., Revere Rm., 2nd floor. Info: 742-7897.

Cambridge \ Tango, Rhumba, and Merengue Dance for Lesbians, Gay Men, and Friends. By New England Dance Movement Center. Beginner, Level I. YMCA at Central Sq., 820 Mass. Ave. 8 to 9 p.m. Week 3 of 4; \$37 for series. Info: 859-9455.



PAUL PARKS

17 WEDNESDAY

Boston \ Goals and Self-Empowerment. Setting goals and keeping yourself focused. Meeting 3 of 6. \$5 donation for series. The Center, 338 Newbury St. Info: Jay 288-3838.

Boston \ Boston NOW Lesbian Rights Task Force. Boston NOW, 971 Comm. Ave. 7 p.m. Info: 782-1056.

Boston \ Forum on Women's Reproductive Rights and HIV. Sponsored by Women's Task Force of Boston AIDS Consortium. Room G2, Harvard School of Public Health, 677 Huntington Ave. 7 to 9 p.m. Info: 432-0885.

Boston \ Gay Men and Lesbians Working Against Question 3 / CLT. Meeting to plan the campaign. 7 p.m. City Hall Room 957. Info: 522-5448.

Boston \ In Shades of Lavender: A Celebration of Gay Male Poetry and Storytelling. Boston gay writers present their work. 7 p.m. Children's Resource Center, Boston Public Library, Copley Square. Info: Gay Reading Group 825-4240.

18 THURSDAY

Boston \ Wholistic Health: A Way of Life: "Acupuncture: Balancing Ki." \$5. Boston Living Center, 140 Clarendon St., 7th fl. 6 to 8 p.m. Info and registration: 267-0900.

Jamalca Plain \ Dance for Lesbians, Gay Men, and Friends. At the Firehouse Arts Center, 659 Centre St. Swing, Fox Trot, and Waltz, Beginner Level II, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Country Western, Beginner Level I, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Cha Cha / Mamba / Samba, Beginner Level II, 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. Session 3 of 4. Info: 859-9455.

Cambridge \ DOB Coffee Bar. Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

Cambridge \ Sarah Dreher reads from her newest lesbian mystery, *A Captive in Time*. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St. 7 p.m. Info: 876-5310.

Framingham \ Being Positively Gay. Workshop for gay men and lesbians outside of Boston, facilitated by two area therapists in honor of National Coming Out Day. Discussion and sharing of resources. \$2 donation. Framingham Civic League, 214 Concord St. 7:30 p.m. Info: (508) 626-0133.

Northampton \ Valley Gay Alliance meets first and third Thursday every month. Basement of the Unitarian Church, 22 Main St. 7:30 p.m. (413) 527-5310.

19 FRIDAY

South Dartmouth \ Rhode Island & S.E. Mass Gay and Lesbian Jewish Group Monthly Oneg. A social and potluck held the third Friday of each month. Info: Debra (401) 273-4765 or Fred (508) 992-7927.

Boston \ Films from the Margin: Films by Poets, Poets on Film. Includes *Un Chant d'Amour* by Jean Genet. Zero Marlborough St. (at corner of Marlborough & Arlington). 7:30 p.m. \$5. Info: 578-8855.

Boston \ Living in a World With AIDS: "Taking Charge of Your Health." Session 4 of 8 in series. 186 Mass. Ave., 2nd floor. 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Info: MCC-Boston 437-0420.

BOBBY'S BACK

Appearing Tuesday thru Saturday at WALDO's, atop J.C. Hillary's. 793 Boylston St. 536-6300

Bringing that special mix of music from Gershwin, Berlin, Webber and Sondheim to Nashville with Pasty & Willie or London with Cleo Laine.

Cambridge \ Open Discussion for Lesbians. DOB, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8 p.m. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

20 SATURDAY

Westboro \ Bicycling Lesbians Around Boston: Fall Foliage Tour. Info: Kathy 625-6478.

Dorchester \ Dorchester GALA Fiea Market / Bake Sale. 9 to 4 p.m. 280 Park St., corner of Wellesley Park. Info: Barry 288-1847.

Watertown \ DOB Lesbian Tennis. Behind Marshall's, Arsenal Mall. 9 a.m. Info: Laura 628-1038.

Boston \ Multicultural Story Hour for Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents. Ages 3 to 8. Sponsored by Fenway Community Health Center and the Lesbian Mothers Group. Info and location: Marian or Jenifer 267-0900.

Princeton \ Am Tikva Hikes Wachusett Mountain. Beginners and advanced hikers welcome. Bring a bag lunch. Meet 11 a.m. at the State Reservation booth. Rain date Sunday 10/21. Info: 926-2536.

Boston \ Men of All Colors Together: Boston's Hot, Horny, Healthy Workshop. Sponsored by Multicultural AIDS Coalition. 2 to 6 p.m. The Jesuit Urban Center, 761 Harrison Ave. Free food. Info: George 266-4378.

Boston \ Prime Timers Monthly Meeting. An organization for older gay men. Info: write D. Bourbeau, 604 Tremont St., Boston 02118-1605.

Boston \ Keep It Up! A Workshop for Gay and Bisexual Men. Presented by AAC and FCHC. 1 to 6 p.m. Buddies, 51 Stuart St. To register: 437-6200, *298.

Watertown \ GLOW International Potluck. All welcome. 5 p.m. Info: Becky 395-4664 or Amy (508) 651-1066.

Boston \ Lesbian Fun and Games. Smoke and alcohol-free. 338 Newbury St. 7 to 10 p.m. the third Saturday of each month. \$2 donation.

Boston \ DOB Autumn Potluck. (DOB = Daughters of Bilitis, the U.S.'s oldest lesbian organization.) 7:30 p.m. 156 Warren Ave, South End. Info: 661-3633.

Boston \ Two Steppin' for AIDS. Presented by Gays for Patsy and Manheart Productions; net proceeds to benefit AIDS groups. Tickets \$15 advance, \$20 at door. Advance sales at Crone's Harvest, Odeon, and Fritz. Villa Victoria, 85 W. Newton St. 8 p.m.

21 SUNDAY

Boston \ New England Assoc. of Lesbian and Gay Psychologists. 10 a.m. to noon. Simmons College, 300 The Fenway. Special Functions Room. All welcome. Info: Joanne 646-2953 or Joel 864-7711.

Somerville \ Nice Jewish Girls "Two In Twenty" Video Party. For Jewish lesbians and their women friends. Pot luck munchies. Noon. Directions: 666-0002.

Waltham \ WOW Canoeing. (WOW = Way Out in Waltham.) Info: 893-0361.

Natick \ MetroWest GALA Potluck / Games Night. Bring your favorite games! Location and dishes info: Scott (508) 877-6129 or Barbara (508) 653-2509.

Dorchester \ Todd and Michael's Silent Movie Night: Buster Keaton Silent Comedies. 7 p.m. Info: 288-0391.

22 MONDAY

Brookline \ An Evening of Great Taste! A Fenway Community Health Center benefit. Fashion and international cuisine, with Boston fashion designer David Josef and Kitty Dukakis. Veronique Restaurant, Longwood Towers. Reception 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$35. Reservations: 247-CARE.

Back Bay \ Dance for Lesbians, Gay Men, and Friends. At U-Mass Boston, 250 Stuart

Street, Room 621. Salsa & Mamba, Beginner Level I, 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. Swing Intensive, Beginner Level II, 8:15 to 9:30 p.m. Session 2 of 3. Info: 859-9455. 10 p.m. Info: 354-8807.

Cambridge \ Phranc. Now on Island Records, here in concert at T.T. The Bear's, 10 Brookline Ave. 8 and 10:30 p.m.

23 TUESDAY

Boston \ Buddy Program Orientation, AIDS ACTION Committtee. Volunteers needed to provide emotional and practical support to AAC clients on a one-to-one basis. Interested persons should fill out an application and attend orientation and training. Orientation meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month. AIDS ACTION offices, 131 Clarendon St. 7:30 p.m. Info 437-6200 x450.

Cambridge \ Bisexual Women's Rap: Women's Spirituality. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Info: 354-8807.

Cambridge \ Healing Service for Those Affected by AIDS. Partial handicap access; ASL interpreted. First Parish Unitarian, 3 Church St. 7:30 p.m. Info: Ecumenical Task Force on AIDS 628-7665.

Boston \ First Anniversary Benefit Evening for the Hospice at Mission Hill. Carly Simon, honorary chairperson. Champagne and desserts, dancing to the White Heat Swing Orchestra. Grand Ballroom, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 15 Arlington St. Artistic Black Tie. Tickets \$75. Reservations and info: 894-1100.

Cambridge \ 30+ Lesbian Rap: The Aging Lesbian. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Info: 354-8807.

Cambridge \ Tango, Rhumba, and Merengue Dance for Lesbians, Gay Men, and Friends. Info: 859-9455.

24 WEDNESDAY

Boston \ Greater Boston Business Council: Travel Fair. Guests will be owners of several gay and lesbian travel agencies. Social hour 6 to 7 p.m. Program 7 to 8 p.m. \$5 donation; refreshments will be served. The Center, 338 Newbury St. Info: Fred 695-1634.

Boston \ Coming Out Support Group. At the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury St. Second and fourth Wednesday of each month. 8 p.m. Info: 247-2927.

25 THURSDAY

Boston \ Wholistic Health: A Way of Life: "Structural Balance: How Chiropractic Maintains Health." \$5. Boston Living Center, 140 Clarendon St., 7th fl. 6 to 8 p.m. Info and registration: 267-0900.

Cambridge \ DOB Coffee Bar. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 7 to 9:30 p.m. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

Cambridge \ Laura Wood and Claire Harding. Christopher's, 1920 Mass. Ave. 8 p.m. \$5. Info: 876-9180.

26 FRIDAY

Cambridge \ Pleasure / Politics: Fourth Annual Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Studies Conference. The first time up from NYC! Harvard University. Friday through Sunday. Registration: Arthur Lipkin 547-2197.

Cambridge \ Lesbians 35+. DOB, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8 p.m. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

ONGOING

Boston TV \ PrideTime - Boston gay and lesbian television, with Jim Voltz. Boston Neighborhood Network, Channels A3 and A8, Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

Some People's Lives. Bette Midler. Produced by Arif Mardin. On Atlantic records, cassettes and compact discs.

By Walta Borawski

Bette Midler started her career as a gay rumor and brought it around to being a gay fact, all the while remaining heterosexual. "There's this woman who sings at the Continental Baths," I remember a friend of mine telling me when I lived in upstate New York. "She's right there at the poolside with men in towels, and naked men in the pool. She sings songs about marijuana and bad sex, and she does old things, like Cole Porter." Sure, I thought: she's me, in my wildest dreams.

Over the next two decades Bette Midler conjured up and delivered some of our wildest dreams. She took Bob Dylan's "*I shall be released*" and made it a feminist anthem (and was told by a *Rolling Stone* critic that she had no right to sing Dylan, had no understanding of his work; Dylan showed up on her next album to sing his "*Buckets of Rain*" with her). She recorded her marijuana song, which turned out to be even older than most Cole Porter tunes. And she became almost as cherished by straight people as by gay people, but as Nina Simone once said about Black people in her audience, "I know where my roots are." The Continental Baths are only a memory now; but Bette Midler doesn't pretend they and she weren't there.

Midler recently told *Redbook* magazine that her career as a stand-up comic was probably over. "I don't find life funny anymore," she said. "I've lost so many friends [to AIDS]." Probably everyone at her level of Hollywood has lost so many friends to AIDS, but with the exception of Susan Sarandon and Meryl Streep showing up with pink triangle buttons (Sarandon on a morning talk show and Streep in the new movie *Postcards from the Edge*), you wouldn't know it, would you?

When Midler won her Grammy for "The Wind Beneath My Wings," she said, "Hey, Bonnie (Raitt), I've got one too." Then she thanked the people winners usually thank: (the producers, the writers, the family, the friends), but she had a little something to add. Earlier on the show she had performed the



Bette Midler returns to the recording studio and sings of Some People's Lives

song, which is from her movie *Beaches*, and as she finished it up in her stunning slate gray 1950s woman-with-hips dress she said, clear as a bell, "Jerry, this is for you." And when, later in the show, she had her Grammy in her hand, she waved it into the camera, and closed her speech of giddy gratitude with

"This is for all the Jerrys in my life."

Midler's friend and collaborator Jerry Blatt had died the previous year of AIDS. Together they had come up with the stage patter that makes her such a powerhouse in concert, and together they had written some of her novelty numbers, including "Fiesta in Rio" ("What's

the good of Rio / when you can't even pee-o...It was fiesta, but I had the clap"). We can sing about clap, but AIDS sort of shuts our mouths.

In *Some People's Lives*, Midler's new album dedicated to Jerry Blatt, there is this sobriety amidst the giggles. The title cut, a song by Janis Ian and Rhonda Fleming (performed by Ian at an AIDS benefit at Reno Sweeney's in Manhattan), is about lives cut short, dreams slipping out. Midler told Stephen Holden of the *New York Times* that when she first heard it, she broke into hysterical sobbing. One gets the decided impression that this is only half exaggeration.

When Midler performed Randy Newman's "I think it's Gonna Rain Today" a couple of seasons back on *Johnny Carson's Tonight Show* she looked like she'd been crawling about the floor for a while; this is what the song is about, and this is what she brings to it. And her new album is, to a large extent, what surviving an epidemic is about: grief and spirit in equal doses.

She begins the new album with an up-tempo song called "One More Round," written by Jessica Harper, Allee Willis and Danny Sembello. It is a joyous little lyric, with infusions of skip-rope jingles: "One for the pretty boys in a row." But you haven't perfected the tap in your toe by the time she moves right into "Some People's Lives," her voice totally tinged in sadness, compassion and weariness from the struggle of life. It is a monumental performance, even for her.

Midler was once compared by a writer at *The New Republic* to T.S. Eliot, because both of them have used a Cuisinart approach to culture in their art. His "The Wasteland" required footnotes because of languages dead and living brought in by the young pretentious poet, and Midler is as comfortable with Cole Porter as she is with Amanda ("The Rose") McBroom. On this album she does a swing rendition of Porter's ironic masterpiece "Miss Otis Regrets," which she begins with her little Bette Midler voice asking if Miss Otis is home. Well, no, dear, she's been hanged for shooting her lover, and we're going to take the whole thing in stride and rhythm, and right now. It is a divine performance.

Continued on page 10

Pleasure

conference

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Politics

HARVARD
university
october 26-28

lesbian bisexual & gay studies

4th Annual

Lesbian, Bisexual, & Gay Studies
Harvard University
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a multidisciplinary conference
including panels, poetry readings,
videos, performance art, films &
photographs

panel topics include:
literature, politics, anthropology,
experiences of people of color,
history, cultural studies, law,
sociology, philosophy, education

plenary speakers: Marlon Riggs &
Catharine Stimpson

preregistration urged
public \$10/ students \$5
banquet \$20 (no sale after 10/22)

registration
Oct. 26, 4:30-7:30
Science Center Lobby

sponsored by The Open Gate

A Fund for Gay & Lesbian Life at Harvard
and the Office of the Assistant Dean for Coeducation

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